DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 349 360 UD 028 851

TITLE	A New Agenda for Educational Equity. Education in a Changing South: New Policies, Patterns and Programs. Report on the Annual Continuing Conference (9th, Atlanta, Georgia, November 5-7, 1991).
INSTITUTION	Southern Education Foundation, Atlanta, Ga.
SPONS AGENCY	Ford Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE	Nov 91
NOTE	38p.; Photographs will copy poorly.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Affirmative Action; *Black Education; *Civil Rights; Community Role; Educational Discrimination; Educational Finance; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Education; Higher Education; Legal Problems; Parent Participation; *Racial Discrimination; School Choice; School Desegregation; School Restructuring; Test Bias
IDENTIFIERS	*African Americans; Comprehensive Services Program; *United States (South)

ABSTRACT

This publication presents the proceedings of a conference on African Americans and educational equity in the southern United States. A brief overview opens the publication followed by information on Jean Fairfax, recipient at the conference of the John A. Griffin Award for Advancing Equity in Education. Other presentations are included as follows: (1) "A Perspective on the Continuing Struggle for Equity" (J. Fairfax); (2) "Evolving Legal Approaches to Equity" (J. L. Chambers); (3) "Some Thoughts on Rights and Remedies" (D. Bell); (4) "Financing Education in Troubled Times" (K. McGuire and B. Canada); (5) "Schools and Communities: Citizen Involvement in Quality Education" (S. Prighozy and A. Blackwell); (6) "Achieving Educational Equity: A Comprehensive Urban Approach" (W. W. Herenton); (7) "Adams Revisited: Equity in Higher Education" (W. R. Cleere and H. Wilson); (8) "Comprehensive Services: Their Role in Educational Equity" (A. Rowe and O. Johnson); (9) "Fairness in Testing" (B. Cole and C. Banks); (10) "Equity: A Generational Perspective" (S. L. Carter); (11) "Meeting the Challenge of Diversity" (S. Denslow, O. Shirley, and B. Gomez); (12) "School Choice" (D. Doyle and B. Rosenberg); and (13) "The Continuing Challenge of Educational Reform" (D. Hornbeck). Also included are numerous photographs and a list of conference participants with addresses. (JB)

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Report on the

NINTH ANNUAL CONTINUING CONFERENCE

November 5-7, 1991
Southern Education Foundation

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Report on the
Ninth Annual Continuing Conference

Education in a Changing South:
New Policies, Patterns and Programs

A Continuing Conference
Sponsored by the
Southern Education Foundation

A New Agenda For Educational Equity

November 5-7, 1991
Atlanta, Georgia

SEF
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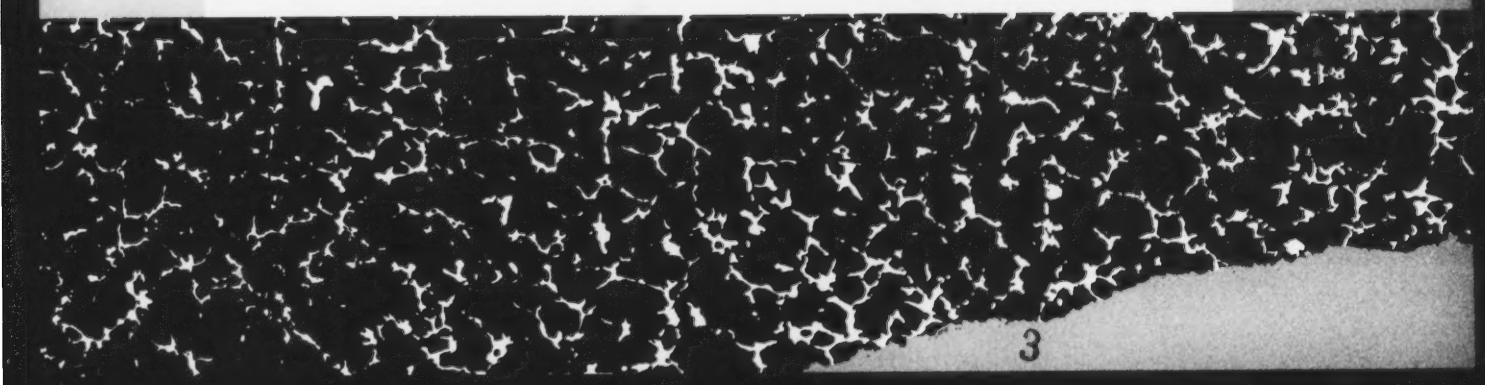

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Southern Education Foundation wishes to thank the members of its Continuing Conference Planning Committee, Cynthia Brown and Ruby G. Martin, for their work in developing the 1991 Continuing Conference. Their thorough knowledge of equity issues and personal commitments to working for positive change in education have been invaluable to the planning process.

The 1991 Continuing Conference is supported in part by the Ford Foundation and the Southern Education Foundation.

Anne Lewis served as Conference rapporteur. Conference photographs by Judy Ondrey.

A transcript of the John A. Griffin Award Dinner proceedings with the appreciations of Jean Fairfax, her full remarks and closing remarks by Vernon Jordan is available, as well as transcripts of the following speakers' addresses: Julius Chambers, Derrick Bell, Willie Herenton, Stephen Carter and David Hornbeck.

The 10th Annual Continuing Conference and John A. Griffin Award Dinner will be held Nov. 10-12, 1992, at the Ritz-Carlton in Atlanta. For more information about the Conference or transcripts, contact Jeffery Harrington at (404) 523-0001.

Overview

A NEW COMMITMENT TO AN ENDURING AGENDA

Quoting Herman Melville, lawyer and civil rights activist Vernon Jordan gave cause to what he described as "an extraordinary homecoming"—the Ninth Annual Continuing Conference of the Southern Education Foundation held Nov. 5-7, 1991 in Atlanta.

For almost a decade the Continuing Conference has brought together individuals who are committed to achieving a fair and just society through quality education for disadvantaged children and young people. But the 1991 event was a special time. By honoring Jean Fairfax as the recipient of the John A. Griffin Award for Advancing Equity in Education, the Conference assembled an impressive roster of civil rights leaders who had learned from and worked alongside this remarkable person. Over and over again they told of being inspired by Jean Fairfax's determination, compassion, integrity and fearlessness. As Delegate Howard Rawlings of the Maryland General Assembly wrote, "She created a legacy of empowerment for the African American community in the field of education."

The Ninth Annual Continuing Conference will be remembered as a watershed meeting for another important reason. While the participants came to celebrate decades of considerable accomplishments, they also reassessed the legacy of the past. The equity agenda is far from complete, creating an undercurrent of pessimism that was noted by several speakers who raised questions about both philosophies and strategies.

The Continuing Conference's discussions about creating a "new agenda" were frank. Yet, while it might have seemed that the program presumed a choice between "old" and "new," the two days of debate and evaluation resulted in a general commitment to an enduring ideal of fairness and justice and a new resolve to persevere.

Jean Fairfax reminded Conference participants that like the civil rights movement, the Southern Education Foundation has undergone many changes. Decades ago, it was a major force in the movement to create free public schools for all children in the South. Today, she said, it is carrying out its sustaining mission by insisting that public education systems become centers of excellence and equity.

"Our lives are connected by a thousand invisible threads, and along these sympathetic fibers our actions run as causes and return to us as results. We cannot live for ourselves alone."

The John A. Griffin Award for Advancing Equity in Education 1991 Recipient Jean Fairfax

An educator, philanthropist and civil rights activist, Jean Fairfax received the second John A. Griffin Award for Advancing Equity in Education at an opening banquet for the Continuing Conference. Those are the facts. The emotions of the moment, however, can hardly be captured in words, because Jean Fairfax's most important role was that of persistent, compassionate mentor to most of those gathered to honor her.

Jean Fairfax's formal association was as a driving force for desegregation through the work of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. She organized local advocates, challenged state policies, pressured federal officials to carry out the promises of *Brown* v. *Board of Education*. She pursued equal access to higher education for minority students through years of litigation in the *Adams* v. *Richardson* case. Beyond desegregation, her issues also were those of hunger and poverty, discrimination in the media, implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and opportunities for black women.

Award recipient Jean Fairfax and former SEF Executive Director John Griffin

Among her legacies also are the Black Women's Community Development Foundation, precursor to the National Black Child Development Institute, and the Black Appalachian Commission. Now retired from official duties, she continues to advise and consult with civil rights leaders across the country. In the summer of 1991, she and her sister, Betty Fairfax, saw their first "graduates" from an eighth grade class adopted in 1987 at Mary McLeod Bethune School in Phoenix receive high school diplomas and make plans to use the scholarships provided by the sisters.

SEF established the John A. Griffin Award for Advancing Equity in Education in 1990 to honor an individual who has made significant contributions to the advancement of equity and quality in education for minorities and disadvantaged citizens in this region. The award is named for John A. Griffin, SEF's executive director from 1965 to 1978 and is presented annually in conjunction with the Continuing Conference. The 1990 award was presented to Augustus Hawkins, former U.S. representative from California.

An Evening of Appreciation for a Lifetime of Work

The chant lasted only a few seconds, and it was faint at best, but the sentiment was evident. It began after Southern Education Foundation consultant Robert Kronley finished reading remarks sent by Howard "Pete" Rawlings, a Maryland state legislator. "Jean Fairfax," Rawlings concluded, "would have made a great president. Maybe it's not too late."

Jean Fairfax, second from right, with friends (l to r) Ruby Martin, Derrick Bell and Peter Libassi

With that, the audience honoring Jean at

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SEF's dinner presentation of the John A. Griffin Award for Advancing Equity in Education burst into applause. Then came the chant: "Run, Jean, run. Run Jean, run..."

If the testimonials to Jean Fairfax were any indication, more than a few people believe she would make an excellent leader of the free world. In a moving tribute that kicked off the Ninth Annual Continuing Conference, speakers stepped to the podium to pay homage to Jean, an educator and civil rights activist who for nearly five decades pursued educational justice in the South. Collectively, their words illuminated the many different facets of Jean's remarkable career. Some highlights:

- Winson Hudson, a community activist who knew Jean from days of struggle in the '60s in Leake County, Mississippi, shared stories recounting the tension that gripped the community in the early moments of integration. "We were just living day to day, waiting to get written off the map," she said, turning to her longtime friend. "Jean, I give you credit for helping us go on."
- Harvard Law Professor Derrick Bell remarked that although African Americans continue their fight for equity, "the life example of those like Jean Fairfax makes perseverance possible." Bell, who has written extensively about affirmative action, added that "[Jean's] life reminds us that we must work and excel even though our abilities are rejected and our skills are seen as threats."
- Julius Chambers, director-counsel of the Legal Defense Fund, praised Jean for her selflessness, unfailing preparation—and persistence ("God knows she was persistent"). Chambers cited some of the many specific projects Jean had brough to bear in her years of work, and he noted that "she reached out to all groups—Black, Native Americans and Hispanics."
- Jean Fairfax also succeeded in walking the wire between what she called the "mutually supportable goals" of desegregation and the enhancement of traditionally black institutions, said the LDF's Phyllis McClure, who worked with Jean for 17 years. McClure captured her colleague's professional style by reading from letters Jean had written to federal officials. "This is a classic Fairfax letter," she said, holding it up. "It is five pages, single spaced, and is very specific about how 'the feds' should correct their transgressions."
- In addition to her professional contributions, Jean also had a major impact on the life of Peter Libassi, a senior vice president for The Travelers Companies. "Jean is a person who is as uncompromising in life as she is compassionate," Libassi said. "In Brooklyn, we would say Jean is a very mean lady. And I have not had one day of peace in 40 years of knowing her." He thanked her for her "warm and affectionate" influence.

Following these tributes, SEF Board Chairman Norman Francis presented to Jean the award named for John A. Griffin. A scholar who worked for years to ease racial tensions among groups and who devoted his scholarly profession to finding solutions to race relation problems in the South, Griffin and his wife, Ann, were present for the ceremony. Both listened intently as Jean Fairfax took the podium to address the men and women who had extolled her. She spoke eloquently about the ongoing challenges and continuing struggles confronting all African Americans. "Ours is a life of chaos, troubles and uncertainties," she told the gathering. "It's OK to be confused, but engagement in this critical struggle for equity must lead us to knowledge.

Anyone who had listened carefully to the testimonials preceding her remarks could have predicted that Jean Fairfax was not about to gloss over the realities of the future. And she did not. Her message reflected her concern that the country's diversity could lead to division rather than unity, in fulfilling the agenda for educational equity. "Achieving a shared vision will become more difficult as America becomes more diverse and economically stratified," she said.

"Educational equity is not a top priority of middle-class blacks. So we should not begin with the assumption that Americans and African Americans have a shared vision, or that we agree on the role public schools should play."

Vernon Jordan, the former head of the National Urban League and the chairman of the dinner committee, presented concluding remarks at the dinner. Calling the event "an extraordinary homecoming," Jordan spoke on behalf of all African Americans not in attendance. "There are many minorities who don't even know your name," he told Jean, "yet they in their own way say, 'thank you, Jean Fairfax,' because they have sense enough to know that change had to come from somewhere."

Jordan then underscored Jean's lifetime of work—of her fight to improve school lunch programs, to provide scholarships, to recruit and retain black students in higher education, to wage battle for some measure of fairness of African Americans in the world of education—he underscored all of this with a simple yet poignant comment. "For the cause of equal opportunity," he said, "Jean Fairfax is still on the payroll, working overtime."

—Michael J. Baxter

"Jean came to Leake County where I lived in a rural area, very poor. And we had to sign a petition to desegregate the public schools. We lived way out in the country, in Mississippi, where the Klan rides day and night. My sister was a plaintiff in the first law suit, but we were pressured so that Debbie lost everything she had. The bank closed her out. We couldn't get $5 worth of credit, and we were still out there fighting. Raising peas and corn, and doing the best we could. But it looked like we had just gone almost as far as we could go. The white folks had put so much pressure on us. But Debbie found Jean Fairfax, and when Jean Fairfax made it known that she was there to help us, look like the sun began to shine down on us.... Jean helped Debbie to take care of her bills and helped others there who were pressured so much.... Jean, I give you credit for helping us to hold on. She have helped save many a person. But we made it through, and now I get plenty of support out of those people that tried to crucify us then. The white community respect what you did, they ask about you, they ask about that Derrick Bell... And I'm glad to see this day in my lifetime—that blacks and whites can work together in peace."

Winson Hudson

A Perspective on the Continuing Struggle for Equity

JEAN FAIRFAX

Jean Fairfax

Years of struggle for racial justice have convinced Jean Fairfax that it is "OK to be confused." As the century draws to a close and she looked back on 40 years of work, she recounted many victories—schools desegregated, funding made more equitable, racial disparities in higher education erased, people of color given career opportunities.

But, she asked, "who among us has not been troubled when the costs of these victories are borne by those who will never benefit from them?" A generation of Prince Edward County, Va., children was sacrificed when their schools were closed to avoid desegregation. After struggling to achieve a critical mass of black students on university campuses, they are then subjected to racially motivated acts of violence.

"Ours is a life of chaos, troubles and uncertainty...of great victories, sometimes limited successes, even failures," Fairfax said. But confusion must not be equated with despair: "It is the wonderment that comes when we survive and learn and are humbled by evidence that we are not omniscient and infallible. It is the confidence that comes when we are loved. It is the wisdom that comes from engagement and reflection."

Fairfax recounted her efforts at litigation in the *Adams* case as her "learning experience." On one hand, she said, this issue embodies the African-American community's conviction that education is a key to full participation in American political, social and economic life. On the other, disagreements over the issue within the black community "have accelerated in scope, intensity and anger since the 1960s," revealing a multiplicity of views and attitudes.

"It is not the fact that we differed that is troubling," Fairfax said. Many times "robust arguments" have created new eras in the black experience, but rhetoric cannot substitute for the critical need to develop consensus on strategies and programs. "When good friends who share a common vision about America and a common passion for education as a vehicle for upward mobility cannot arrive at a programmatic consensus," she insisted, "we are, indeed, in trouble."

The strategies used to implement desegregation—crosstown busing, mandatory reassignment of teachers, closing of schools—divided many blacks, she reminded the audience. Fairfax found herself disagreeing with good friends, such as Andrew Young, over desegregation suits, as in Atlanta. A meeting organized to reach a consensus, she recalls, "disintegrated into a wild, raucous shouting session." Many believed the *Adams* decision would destroy traditionally black public colleges. Developing a consensus on this issue "became a major challenge for me," she said.

The ruling and regulatory process for *Adams* was vitally important, Fairfax explained, because it was shaped by those effected by the outcome of the litigation. And the process worked. "Black folks from apparently irreconcilable positions came together, grew in trust and created a programmatic consensus. It became a platform, a center that held," she recalled. Progress was made in statewide desegregation of campuses, and black institutions were enhanced; none were closed. This was an example, Fairfax said, "of a move from rhetoric and arguments to reconciliation in action." She predicted there would be more issues in the 1990s that could potentially tear the black community apart, but "we need

"We must not begin with the assumption that we have a shared vision about America, by Americans in general, and by persons of color, in particular. Or that we agree on the role that public schools should play in addressing the needs of a culturally diverse and economically stratified nation. We must create, therefore, more opportunities for discussion about vision and values."

to build on the *Adams* experience and learn from it."

Noting the rapid growth in diversity within the nation's population—and diversity within groups—Fairfax said that equity issues in the future no longer will be primarily black/white. The struggles ahead will focus on genuine multiculturalism in education, on balancing diversity in governance and in policymaking.

With its experience in desegregation and school reform in the South, the Southern Education Foundation, Fairfax said, could be in the vanguard of leadership on the new issues. For example, it is time to move beyond rhetoric on the issue of special programs for young, black inner-city males, she contended, and take some risks that address the problem but also meet constitutional requirements.

Fairfax warned, however, that reaching consensus may become more and more difficult in the future because "a growing number of Americans do not share the same vision about what America should be in the 21st century." Cultural diversity and greater disparities in income are widening differences about the role of public schools, she pointed out, with middle-class blacks not particularly interested in educational equity—as is true for the middle class in general.

Quoting a spokesperson for new leadership among blacks, Stephen Carter in his *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*, Fairfax described his call for "reconciled solidarity" among black intellectuals as a "beginning." But solidarity based on "shared love for our people" is not sufficient, she concluded. What is needed, she said, "is solidarity in action for our people."

Evolving Legal Approaches to Equity

JULIUS L. CHAMBERS

Reform and innovation are key words today in all facets of society—and especially in education—yet "equity" seldom is added to the discussion. As in the past, legal approaches need to be fashioned to ensure that all children will have access to equal quality education, Julius Chambers said, opening the first session of the Ninth Annual Continuing Conference.

Before outlining some potential new approaches, Chambers first looked back—to the accomplishments made possible by previous legal victories. "*Brown* set the stage for us to begin building an America which fulfills its promise of equality and justice for blacks and other minorities," he said. School segregation alone has not solved the daunting problems resulting from poverty and continuing racism, he admitted, but studies confirm the significant progress made by black students in the past 20 years.

School desegregation eventually led to greater equity in higher education, Chambers noted, especially through the *Adams* litigation. Moreover, the influence of *Adams* was felt outside of the South.

But it is obvious that a great deal of work needs to be done, Chambers said, much of it related as much to economic class as to race, with these two factors overlapping as they affect educational achievement. School desegregation has been stalled ever since interdistrict remedies were struck down, and in recent years the Justice Department and many lower courts have openly tried to

Julius L. Chambers

"We have to devote a major portion of our time now simply to preserving some of the limited gains we were able to achieve over the past 35 years."

undermine many successful desegregation plans, Chambers said. The U.S. Supreme Court is now considering a case from Dekalb County, Ga., that could further erode desegregation efforts. Similarly, another case before the high court threatens to undo remedies fashioned for higher education.

While vigorously trying to protect the equity gains of almost four decades, civil rights advocates must look for new litigation strategies, Chambers said. He suggested five possibilities:

- *Developing a constitutional right of every child to a high-quality education.* The increasing control of states over local academic standards has eroded the argument for local control of education and taken education governance and education finance past the issues that came before the U.S. Supreme Court in *San Antonio* v. *Rodriguez*, Chambers said. A major part of the Legal Defense Fund strategy, he explained, is beginning to center on the legal means of ensuring that standards can be met, e.g. in financing and in high-quality preparation of students. "The more funding relies on state revenues and the less on local property taxes," Chambers said, "the less state officials will be able to use local control as a rationale for state inaction to remedy any inequities in facilities, personnel and curriculum." *Rodriguez* could be overruled on the argument that segregation occurs because of poverty, he said.
- *Linking class and race.* Such an initiative would attempt to shape a new constitutional principle not addressed by *Brown*.
- *Focusing on community practices and programs that impact not only on school integration but also on the education children receive.* While the LDF abandoned an attempt to carry school desegregation on the back of housing segregation, "It is time, I believe, that we begin to look at the collective effect of state and city practices (housing, hospitals, other social services, job locations) on the educational program for children," Chambers explained.
- *Focusing more on testing and segregation of students within classes.* Some improvements occur when segregation remedies are implemented, but they are limited, he said. Testing and classroom segregation practices need to be evaluated more closely as to their effect on the achievement of minority students.
- *Paying more attention to teachers and the instructional programs within schools.* LDF is pursuing the establishment of legally defined standards guaranteeing that every child would have access to a quality education program in a case in Hartford, Conn., and a possible one in Mississippi.

In the 1930s and 1940s blacks were able to effect some change by forming coalitions and relying on community efforts, Chambers reminded Conference participants. "We have to call on those same efforts, those same coalitions, to continue with the goals that we began even before *Brown*," he said, "namely, to ensure that all children, whether from the streets of Harlem or the cotton fields of the South, would have the same opportunity as the rich kids from Scarsdale, or from Stamford, Connecticut."

Chambers noted that other remedies, such as the voluntary magnet program in Kansas City, achieve some results but they are expensive. He acknowledged the frustration behind proposals for all-black male immersion schools, but because of additional costs for quality programs in such schools, "you will see poor, black students relegated to segregated schools with inferior resources," he predicted. The Bush administration's remedy for reform, the America 2000 schools and choice plans extending to private schools, "address the white middle class," Chambers believes. "Choice does not offer much opportunity to poor, minority kids in the rural South or the inner city. No one is talking about enhancing the schools left behind."

Julius Chambers has been Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund since 1984 and was its first legal intern in 1963, working on civil rights cases throughout the South. He is on the board of numerous legal and educational organizations.

> **"When *Brown* was decided, I was a young teenager in a small segregated high school in North Carolina. I remember gathering with my schoolmates and teachers after class and celebrating. As lay people, we sincerely believed that *Brown* marked the end of the unequal, inadequate education provided to blacks throughout the South. We honestly thought that black people would, suddenly, be able to attend the schools of their choice, the 'good, white schools,' where there were better teachers, better facilities, a much better chance to make something of ourselves.... That kind of naivete wasn't limited to the children and adults of Montgomery County in North Carolina. It also extended to many of the civil rights lawyers of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund who fought to make *Brown* possible.... I don't need to remind this audience that many of the expectations fostered by *Brown* and other desegregation cases have been unfulfilled...."**
>
> ***Julius Chambers***

Some Thoughts on Rights and Remedies

DERRICK BELL

Derrick Bell

The 1991 Continuing Conference was a "bittersweet occasion" to Derrick Bell. It celebrated gains made in equity during four decades of difficult legal and advocacy work, but in the last decade of the 20th century, "we are witnessing the erosion of civil rights gains we once hoped would be lasting," he said.

In an address that took the "romance" out of integration efforts and at the same time provided a strong philosophical and moral base for continuing to fight, Bell frankly expressed much of the underlying sentiment among those attending the Continuing Conference.

Not all the data are bleak, he said, but an honest assessment would conclude that "in the past 300 years, African Americans have waged a struggle for racial justice that has no end in sight." *Brown* may have been the 20th century equivalent of the Emancipation Proclamation, he said, but both did more to further the country's foreign policy interests than to aid blacks. And contemporary color barriers may be less visible but are just as real and oppressive as when Jim Crow signs confronted blacks everywhere. Now when they are rejected, "blacks must wrestle with the question of whether race or individual failing prompted their exclusion," Bell noted. "And either conclusion breeds frustration and eventually, despair. We call ourselves African American, but despite centuries of struggle, none of us, no matter our prestige or position, is more than a few steps away from a racially motivated exclusion, restriction or affront."

No matter how much professional prestige and/or wealth they obtain, blacks face bias in the job market, the housing market, bank loans, even car loans, where cynical dealers steer minorities and women to salespeople of their race or gender, he said. But Bell's most harsh criticism was reserved for the appointment of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. Thomas, he said, has built his career in the Republican administrations by becoming "the black voice in a white conservative chorus that specialized in anthems condemning affirmative actions, civil rights leaders and their organizations, and blacks on welfare, including, in Thomas' case, his own sister. Whatever the character of his performance on the higher court, Justice Thomas' appointment as the replacement for Justice Thurgood Marshall added deep insult to the continuing injury inflicted on black people."

Bell equated the appointment to that of slave masters elevating to overseer those slaves willing "to mimic the master's view...and by their presence provide a perverse legitimacy to the racial oppression they aided and approved." Another comparison from a later era was to Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Compromise speech, in which he told black people to eschew racial equality and, instead, seek to gain acceptance by becoming useful through trades and work skills developed through hard work and sacrifice. Just as that speech set a pattern for race relations at the close of the 19th century, Bell predicted the Thomas appointment would "mark and mar the status of blacks well into the 21st century."

The Thomas appointment was a warning, Bell said, of the continuing vulnerability of black rights to political and economic power wielded by groups of whites. Bell argued that certain truths cannot be ignored:

- What are called "racial remedies" are really the outward manifestations of perhaps unconscious conclusions that those remedies will secure, advance or at least not harm societal interests deemed important by middle- and upperclass whites. The benefits of these civil rights advances for blacks are mainly symbolic.
- Too often what is called progress on civil rights is cyclical rather than linear. Legal rights are gained and lost in response to economic and political developments over which blacks have little or no control. The status of black people remains fixed, no matter what progress is made by a precious few.
- The injustices that so dramatically diminish the rights of blacks are linked to the serious economic disadvantage suffered by many whites who lack money and power. There is, in other words, an intricate relationship between racial discrimination and the slow pace of political and social reform. Playing poor white against black works every time, Bell said. Conservative white politicians "gain and hold even the highest office... (because) they rely on the time-tested formula of getting needy whites to identify on the basis of their shared skin color, suggesting with little or no subtlety that white people must stand together against the Willy Hortons, or racial quotas, or affirmative action."

This racial bonding by whites "reveals racism as far more than the failure of liberal democratic practices," Bell said. Some contend that liberal democracy and racism are historically reinforced in American society; society thrives only because racial discrimination continues. This means, said Bell, that "blacks and their white allies must seek a new and more realistic goal for our civil rights activism." They need "a rationale that makes life bearable in a society where blacks are, and likely will be, a permanent subordinate class."

Just as the acceptance of death is important for healing in psychotherapy, Bell said blacks must ask what is the worth of working for civil rights? That question is not as discouraging as it may sound, he said, because with the question out in the open, "we can forthrightly look at the dilemma of meaning

"So while we have to continue to work hard on individual issues of racial discrimination, we have to also address the reality that we live in a society in which racism has been internalized, institutionalized to the point of being an essential and inherently functioning component of the society."

and come to realize...that meaning ensues from honest forthright activity, without any hang-ups and suppressed views of what really is." Accepting the idea that their efforts will not lead to transcendent change—indeed, may be of more help to the system than to its victims—"can lead to policy positions and campaigns that...are more likely to remind the powers that be that out there are persons like you who are not on their side and determined to stand in their way."

Freed of the rigidity of "we're going to overcome," blacks may be less ready to continue blindly their traditional support for integration-oriented remedies as the ideal, he said. Such humility was not evident, he noted, in the actions by civil rights groups to halt efforts by black parents and black school officials in Detroit to experiment with all-male schools. The civil rights community, at the least, should adopt the medical profession's creed of, "First, do no harm."

Bell addressed a seeming inconsistency in his remarks—a call to give up the dream of real permanent racial equality *and* a call to continue the fight against racism. Both are necessary, he said, "because we must learn how to survive the unbearable landscape and climate of truth." Generations in the past found meaningfulness in honest engagement and a humble commitment, "beating the odds while...knowing as only they could know that all those odds were stacked against them."

Despite his disavowal of traditional views, Bell is "convinced there is something real out there in America for black people." It is not the romantic love of integration, but a racial philosophy that "is a hard-eyed view of racism as it is and our subordinate role in it. We must realize with our slave forebearers that the struggle for freedom is, at bottom, a manifestation of our humanity that survives and grows stronger through resistance to oppression—even if that oppression is never overcome."

Bell's views were challenged, however, by several leading civil rights activists. Willis Hawley of Vanderbilt University argued that to stand in the way of those who maintain power through racism "is to break down racism." Further, he said desegregation occurs when it is in the interest of whites—"it is more important than ever before to make that case stronger," he said. Likewise, Julius Chambers believed Bell came down more for "resignation" than for "acceptance" and asked how Bell's views would help those who are being poorly educated?

Bell replied that he believes activists should hold fast on the law, "but they should support local communities more—they should go out in the community and knock on doors.... Our ideals should not get in the way of what parents want for their children."

Derrick Bell has been Weld Professor of Law at Harvard University since 1986 and is now a visiting professor at New York University Law School. He also taught law at Harvard University from 1969 to 1980 and served as dean of the University of Oregon Law School from 1980-85.

"The year was 1964. It was a quiet, heat-hushed evening in Harmony, a small black community near the Mississippi Delta. Some Harmony residents, in the face of increasing white hostility, were organizing to ensure implementation of a court order mandating desegregation of their schools the next September. Walking with Mrs. Biona MacDonald, one of the organizers, up a dusty unpaved road toward her modest home, I asked where she and the others, Dovie and Winson Hudson, all the rest, where they found the courage to continue working for civil rights in the face of intimidation that included the loss of their jobs in town, the local bank trying to foreclose on their mortgages, bombings, shots fired through their houses. 'Derrick,' she said slowly and seriously, 'everyone has their reasons, but for me, I'm an old woman. I lives to harass white folks.' Now you notice that Mrs. MacDonald didn't say she risked everything because she hoped or expected to win out over the whites. As she well knew, they held all the economic and political power and the guns as well. Rather, she recognized that powerless as she was, she had and intended to use courage and determination as a weapon...."

Derrick Bell

Financing Education in Troubled Times

KENT McGUIRE AND BENJAMIN CANADA

Visiting schools within states that provide an education with very disparate funding bases—as Kent McGuire, program director for education for the Lilly Endowment, has done throughout the country—would explain the underlying problem in guaranteeing equity in education. In Oklahoma, for example, McGuire found classes being held in the gym in one district and teachers leaving because of low pay; in another Oklahoma district, teachers were provided with free housing, and the district's eight-man football team played on astro-turf.

However, although this problem is central to improving education and obtaining equity, little is happening, McGuire reported. Only in Kentucky and perhaps Texas is any progress being made on reducing funding inequities, nor is there much research being done on school funding inequity. The basic issues remain the same—the relationship between wealth and spending, and the relationship between tax effort and spending, according to McGuire. State policymakers are still basing debates on the argument that differences between districts are due to "tastes in the communities," he said.

The issue is being "danced" in both courts and legislatures. And while some argue that it is a technical problem, McGuire said it must be viewed more as a political one. "Where there is no political will" to address funding inequities, school finance reform "will not be able to turn the corner," he said. Also, when school finance suits hit the courts in the 1970s, states had the funds to try to comply. In today's fiscal climate, McGuire noted, the lack of money has shifted the focus away from the importance of equity and toward "efficiency and productivity."

McGuire listed a number of school reforms that need to be linked to school finance, including:

- *Deregulation.* While giving more authority to school sites makes sense, McGuire warned that "regulations are there for good reasons," primarily to counterbalance the actions or lack of action by states and local school systems. Furthermore, those needing the most flexibility are those least likely to get it under deregulation. Flexibility is given to schools in the suburbs, but more controls are put on urban schools, he noted.
- *School choice.* This is never played on a level field, according to McGuire, nor are the costs of choice programs readily acknowledged.
- *Teacher policy.* Instead of focusing on class size, policymakers should seek to distribute the best teachers equitably across school systems.
- *Non-instructional policies.* For example, one-third of the states have no policies regarding equity in facilities.

"Unless education reforms are tied to school finance," McGuire said, "there will not be enough money to equalize educational outcomes." He also recommended that financial solutions for the problems of urban and rural poor schools must look like solutions also for the middle class, such as preschool programs and day care. Litigation should be used at least as "theater," pushing legislatures to action. And, finally, he said, new notions of equity and fairness "need to shift to treat unequals unequally instead of treating everyone the same." A major equity issue, he noted, is to maintain equity for the differential needs of

Kent McGuire

"After spending seven to eight years going around working with states, I am chagrined to report that things are worse today. There are no significant changes anywhere in the way we fund schools."

Benjamin Canada

schools, especially in light of local foundation funding that often targets certain schools. "The politics of differential treatment is one we have to get our heads around," he said.

McGuire expressed strong concern about the slow pace of changing schools, one by one. What is needed, he said, is funding of "policymakers to do the right things."

How can a local school district in a poor state make up for years of financial neglect by its community? Go for "commitment," not just support, Benjamin Canada, superintendent of the Jackson, Miss., schools advised Conference participants. Ever since the schools were desegregated 27 years ago, Jackson residents had refused to provide monies for school bonds to build or maintain the school buildings. Like other urban districts, Jackson was experiencing a "slow and painful death" of its schools, akin, said Canada, to "intellectual murder."

The community turned around because it became involved in the details of the needs of the schools, Canada said. An audit was conducted of every building in the school system by a broad cross-section of people—grandparents, business leaders, church leaders. People who had not been in the schools since their own children graduated or who held inaccurate perceptions of the schools saw firsthand the sagging ceilings, the lack of minimal bathroom facilities and the overcrowding. Such involvement also helped school leaders "connect the need for more money for the schools to the quality of life that many in the community had enjoyed," Canada said.

Public education too often only reacts, the superintendent believes. It needs "spin doctors" to get its messages out and needs to go beyond getting money for current operations and lay the foundation for tomorrow. "We have always had a lot of people who said they supported us, but the thing we didn't have was commitment," he said. The school board's role is to assure that funding is in terms of a school system rather than a system of schools, he added.

Kent McGuire is program director for education for the Lilly Endowment. He has been a consultant to many states and national groups on school finance and an assistant professor at the University of Colorado/Denver. Benjamin Canada has spent 25 years as a teacher and school administrator. He came to his position in Jackson, Miss., from the deputy superintendent's post in Tucson, Ariz.

School and Communities: Citizen Involvement in Quality Education

STEVEN PRIGHOZY AND ANGELA BLACKWELL

Of the 60 public education funds now established in 26 states, those in Chattanooga, Tenn. and in Oakland, Calif., developed for similar reasons—to address the failure of the schools—but they went about the work in different ways.

Citizen involvement in Chattanooga's schools did not exist before 1985, according to Steven Prighozy, executive director of the Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga, and when it came together it was for the purpose of turning around a single public school, one based on the curriculum ideas of the Paideia Project. The success of this school—with its single-track curriculum, mandated parent involvement and community service, alternative ways of

assessing students—led to greater involvement in the public schools by the private sector. In 1988 area superintendents came to private citizens and asked them to set up a public education foundation, independent of the schools, to encourage school change and citizen involvement. The Public Education Foundation now has an endowment of $6.5 million and has raised $1.5 million for the special purpose of changing the schools through faculty development. The latter funds are being used to fund school-site decision-making at 10 pilot sites, a series of colloquia run by teachers for teachers and a principals' collaborative.

This collaboration, said Prighozy, "will not change the world, but the pulse rate has increased in Chattanooga. We are no longer dealing with the issue of apathy."

A new effort at citizen involvement in Oakland began amidst scandals, deficits and adversarial relationships, according to Angela Blackwell, executive director of the Urban Strategies Council in Oakland. "But the real problem was that the children were not learning," she said. The Commission for Positive Change "appointed itself" to deal with the crisis in the school system, but its work "centered on helping children achieve."

The commission's first task was to win credibility and trust in the community, which it obtained through a series of nine hearings held around the district. Small group input at the hearings was followed up with responses from the commission and a final, widely distributed document that set out what the citizens wanted from their schools.

Based on the issues developed by this process, the commission set up six committees for follow-up work, and a second document laid out strategies. What has occurred in Oakland, said Blackwell, is a "remarkable" movement among citizens around public education. Their interests have broadened, there are higher standards for involvement, and the district has responded with a focus on equity and on staff development.

"We were honest with our point of view," Blackwell explained. "We were about poverty" and its effects upon the achievement of students, and although the business community was not heavily involved at first, it began to participate, fitting its agenda with that of the commission. The commission's efforts also merged with a similar initiative at the University of Oakland.

In Chattanooga, however, Prighozy attributed the progress on school change and support to the business community, while the university community "played no role."

Prighozy, Blackwell and the panel moderator, Wendy Puriefoy, president of the Public Education Fund Network, all stressed the need to adjust to local political situations. In Chattanooga, the process for change has been slow because few believed students could learn at the high levels demonstrated in the first school, according to Prighozy. Its success was initially resented, and "only now is there a comfort level for change." Parents in Boston did not have high expectations for students, Puriefoy noted, so the process there was one of building community awareness over a long period of time. Unless this takes place, she said, the initiative will wind up with only one or two model schools.

In Oakland, according to Blackwell, the commission needed to assure other active community groups that it was not seeking "to occupy their territory."

They acknowledged that communities need the resources to establish citizen funding of change efforts, but Puriefoy advised against a too-heavy emphasis on funding. "If we are about the process of creating community," she said, "it is dangerous to say to the people that the effort will cost money, but it is also dangerous to say that a better community comes for free." Such citizen efforts must "walk a delicate balance," she said.

Angela Blackwell

"While community involvement often comes in times of crisis, it doesn't always have to be that way."

Steven Prighozy

Prior to starting the Public Education Foundation, Steven Prighozy was founding director of the Chattanooga School for Arts and Sciences. In addition to serving as executive director of the Urban Strategies Council, Angela Blackwell is co-chair of the Commission for Positive Change in Oakland Public Schools. Wendy Puriefoy served as chief executive officer of the Boston Foundation before joining the Public Education Fund Network.

Achieving Educational Equity: A Comprehensive Urban Approach

WILLIE W. HERENTON

Willie Herenton

"What is needed in this country is a comprehensive, national policy on urban education—and I don't think it is going to come from the Bush administration."

Growing up in Memphis, Willie Herenton recalls riding at the back of the bus and drinking from a water fountain labeled, "For Colored Only." On election night in October, he stood proudly at a podium in a hotel that as a little boy he could have entered only as a busboy or cleaner. He was the new mayor-elect, accepting the challenge to lead one of the South's major cities in a facility "that my parents and grandparents and even myself during my youth could not have enjoyed."

Herenton served his hometown as superintendent of its 105,000-student school system for 12 years, so when he talked to Continuing Conference participants about the needs of urban education, he knew his subject well.

Too many people in the cities, he said, see public school systems as liabilities rather than assets, and "it will take committed, intelligent leadership to move our urban schools forward." Yet, the reality is that much needs to be done with scarce resources. Poverty and housing conditions weigh students down, Herenton said, as does the large percentage of the teachers in urban schools "who do not believe that urban children are capable of being successful in our institutions." One of the biggest problems facing urban systems, he emphasized, is the need to find teachers "who are trained, dedicated and committed to the notion that all children can learn."

Herenton also expressed concern about the leadership pool for urban school systems. Memphis, he noted, took seven months to find a new superintendent. All minority school leaders—administrators as well as school board members—face the problem of expectations beyond what they can deliver with the resources available, he said.

Even as mayor, he said, "I can't walk on water" and must use scare resources in creative ways. Anticipating an environment in which federal funding for urban areas will continue to decrease, Herenton predicted fierce competition for funds among public services, including the schools, noting that Tennessee's current school finance litigation could mean the loss of one-third of state aid to its urban districts.

Schools cannot meet all the needs of their students alone, Herenton said, but he also pointed out that there is no national urban policy that deals collectively with education, housing, job training, nutrition and health care. The mayor-elect criticized the Bush administration's answer to education policy—the America 2000 plan. He also accused it of being tied to partisan politics. Memphis, he said, was designated the first America 2000 community in the middle of the mayor's race in a ceremony attended by Republican officials from

Washington. "And what was interesting about it," Herenton said ironically, "was they had all white males standing before a predominantly white audience talking about a public school system that was 80 percent black." Washington cannot be looked to for relief by urban districts, he admonished.

City leaders must work to change the federal agenda, he said, including obtaining more funding for early intervention programs, parental education, effective teacher training, and partnerships with higher education. A national initiative for youth job training is needed to stem the dropout rate. Herenton pledged to work with other urban leaders to develop a coalition to help schools.

"When we were picking cotton," he said at the end of his luncheon address, "my grandmother would always tell me that education is a way out of the slums, the passport to the future. And in our ever-increasing technological society, education is still the answer.... We cannot give up on our dream of equity in education and in American life."

Before becoming the first black mayor of Memphis, Herenton was superintendent of the city's schools. A member of SEF's board of trustees, Herenton also serves on the board of numerous educational and community groups.

Adams Revisited: Equity in Higher Education

W. RAY CLEERE AND HARRISON WILSON

At the Ninth Annual Continuing Conference, *Adams* was as much on the agenda as *Brown*. The longest civil rights case on record, it did not do all that it promised in the way of equity in higher education, contended Ehridge W. McMillan, president of SEF, but it did establish overall goals (the means to be decided by states) and it was to be implemented so as to avoid burdens on black students, teachers and institutions. If it failed in its goals, he said, the reason was because "the Office for Civil Rights basically went out of business."

Left in its wake are three current problems of equity, according to W. Ray Cleere, commissioner of higher education for Mississippi:

- *Attrition.* "We have accepted college dropout rates of 50 percent or more as normal," said Cleere. Further, the fact that 60-70 percent of the dropout rate occurs among poor students has been ignored. He added that a student who drops out of college is seldom ever supportive of higher education again. The solutions would be more realistic admission counseling, better preparation for higher education in high school, better transitions with community colleges, and good alternative funding programs.
- *Student debt/financial aid.* What began in the 1960s and 1970s as a balanced program of grants and small loans has become a loan system which "has gone bad" and is only good for large banks, according to Cleere. A student can easily amass a loan-based debt of $8-10,000, initially borrow from the hometown bank but because of loan transfers, wind up owing the Mitsubishi Bank in Japan. The highest rate of student aid defaults occurs among those students who left college after a year or less. These should be written off, advised Cleere. The highest percentage of defaults occurs at proprietary

Harrison Wilson

"Students in urban areas need a feeling they can go to college and can graduate. We need to provide them with opportunities so they don't hang out on the streets."

schools, followed by traditionally black colleges. The highest cash defaults occur at white institutions.

Using his state as an example, Cleere said the amount of money needed for college loans was estimated in the 1970s to be $100 million; today, approximately $600 million in loans are in repayment. The sheer volume of defaults puts the program in jeopardy, he said, further predicting that the skyrocketing rise in tuition will make the situation considerably worse. Cleere recommended that there be a substantial grant program, the influence of proprietary schools be curbed, and state grant programs be strengthened.

- *Program quality.* No governor is making higher education quality a top priority, Cleere said, noting that of every $1 going into higher education, just under 20 cents actually gets to the classroom. Quality is diluted because of the dependence on part-time faculty. In order to shift more resources to full-time faculty in the upper divisions, more students should be encouraged to attend community colleges—thus also reducing their personal debt.

He also would restore strong core curriculum programs at colleges and establish collaborative initiatives with public schools to improve their offerings, such as mentoring for students and institutes for high school teachers. Jean Fairfax, however, challenged the proposal to depend more on community colleges, saying they do not do well by minority students. Cleere answered that community colleges no longer are considered "dead end." Further, they offer high-risk students more curricula options, and they help students avoid a high debt for two years.

"If higher education is going to get back on its feet," Cleere said, "we must be publicly accountable, set clear public goals, set minority graduation rate goals, convert student scholarship grants to need-based grants, and follow students carefully to prevent them from dropping out or to offer them alternatives because we can't afford to lose them."

The agreement reached between Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University under the *Adams* decree set an example of what could be accomplished on equity, using the *Adams* guidelines. Harrison Wilson, president of Norfolk State University, described the agreement and underscored the importance of preserving the integrity and expanding the capacity of traditionally black colleges (the next week the U.S. Supreme Court was to hear a case appealing the need for continued agreements under *Adams*). In 1989, he pointed out, one-half of the black college graduates in the country received their degrees from such campuses.

The Virginia agreement provided funds for capital expansion at Norfolk State, as well as aggressive recruiting of white students for the campus (they now represent 14 percent of the enrollment). The pairing of the two schools worked in Virginia, said Wilson, and should have been copied in other states.

McMillan noted that the success of such agreements under *Adams* was due more to state coalitions than to efforts by the Office for Civil Rights. Perhaps it is time to revive such coalitions, he said.

Before becoming Mississippi's first commissioner of higher education, W. Ray Cleere served as vice chancellor of the University System of Georgia. Prior to joining Norfolk State as president, Harrison Wilson was executive assistant to the president at Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn.

W. Ray Cleere

Comprehensive Services: Their Role in Educational Equity

AUDREY ROWE AND OTIS JOHNSON

Achieving equity for at-risk children requires enlarging the vision of what education in a community consists of, panel moderator Ann Rosewater, senior associate with the Chapin Hall Center for Children in Chicago, noted in opening a panel discussion of the newest major development in public social policy—comprehensive services. And it means creating a stronger role for schools in many areas, including day care, preschool programs and afterschool services.

Providing a state view of this trend was Connecticut's Commissioner of Income Maintenance, Audrey Rowe, who began by describing the multi-needs of a typical low-income family and the many programs and resources available to help such families. However, accessing these services is a problem, she said. "The needs of low-income families to maneuver services is central and requires new approaches from all of us," she said. Schools especially should be more creative and less turf-conscious, if they expect children's needs to be met.

The elements of policymaking to create a climate for collaboration include:

- *Better communication*, particularly of a vision that is articulated clearly and provides common goals and objectives. Suggesting a theme, Rowe said "we in social services need to serve the total child/family."
- *Development of more cooperative ways of providing services.* These could include co-locations of services and cross-training of staffs to share information and skills.
- *Strategies for interagency services.* More than collaboration, Rowe called for consensus building to keep children from falling through the cracks.

Examples of very effective collaborations include Rochester, N.Y.'s use of schools as sites for access to a range of services by families, the Savannah Youth Authority, the Connecticut Family Resource Centers and Kentucky's Integrated Delivery System. The last example, she explained, provides no new money but includes a joint agreement between the state departments of education and human services to help local agencies better coordinate their services.

These programs have some common characteristics, according to Rowe, including: easy access to a wide array of preventive services, techniques to meet changing needs of families, a focus on the whole family, an emphasis on increasing families' abilities to manage various systems in an atmosphere of respect, and an emphasis upon improved outcomes.

Most important of all, said Rowe, is the "political will to work on behalf of children and families."

At the local level, the state of support for children and families is back where it was at the turn of the century, contended Otis Johnson, executive director of the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority. At that time, school social work began outside of the school system itself. Today, it is outside forces compelling schools to look at their role and responsibility in providing for students with different needs from those which their services were designed to help. "We have to ask if we are really organizing to meet the needs of children if we continue to use categorical systems" originally meant to serve middle-class children, he said.

The Savannah Youth Authority, one of four city collaboratives funded by

Otis Johnson

"We are a tugboat trying to turn around a battleship. We can do it, but it takes time, and we need constant pressure on the system. It's tough."

Audrey Rowe

the New Futures project of the Annie B. Casey Foundation, is run by a 23-member board seeking to provide both a continuum of services for poor families and to restructure the public schools. Other approaches have not worked, Johnson said candidly. The Casey approach is to make cities "into villages that find ways to wrap children in a continuum of services."

To gain community support, the Youth Authority provides data—the facts and figures about growing up in Savannah that the business community knows how to interpret. As a result, the city has a Savannah Compact with goals for schools and for the business community. Through state legislation, the project has been able to launch "Link Up for Learning," an attempt to provide one-stop services in schools. The Youth Authority identified the 10 most frequently used agencies by families and children, and the current goal is to have an interagency agreement among them, said Johnson. Also, school restructuring efforts are centering on retraining teachers to be more effective with students who are culturally different from them.

Providing data is one of the carrots that can be used "to get people talking together," Rowe said. From that beginning, however, those involved must arrive at goals that are mutually defined. "Collaboration is very difficult," she cautioned. "It means everyone gives up something...but the process is as important as the result itself."

And she and Johnson both said their experiences provide a central lesson—good collaboration takes a lot of time.

Before joining the Connecticut state government, Audrey Rowe was human resources administrator for the city of New Haven and commissioner of human services in Washington, D.C. She also was a policy analyst for the Children's Defense Fund. A native of Savannah, Otis Johnson was a member of the City Council for six years and for several years headed the department of social work and applied sociology at Savannah State College.

Fairness in Testing

BEVERLY COLE AND CURTIS BANKS

The current state of equity issues in testing is more of a seascape than a landscape, according to Curtis Banks of Howard University: "There is a lot of tossing around." That tossing around, however, is stirring up a lot of new challenges that must be understood and dealt with as equity issues, not just problems with testing.

Among the initiatives is the Congressionally established National Council on Educational Standards and Testing, due to release its report in January 1992. Congress directed that the Council give equal importance in its report to the validity, reliability and fairness issues inherent in a national effort to establish standards and testing.

Another national effort is that of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and involved in deciding the entry-level work skills needed by young people. This movement, said Banks, is aimed at aligning education with the needs of the workplace. Consequently, it will push employment testing from the job-entry context to the

Curtis Banks

"The major equity problems facing education will be the same as faced in testing in the workplace."

job-preparation context—the schools. This also means that education will have a new role, one of technical and theoretical leadership on testing.

Drawing from his knowledge of the SCANS report process, Banks said the cognitive, intellectual standards of the past are being reformulated to include performance skills such as attitudes and social skills. It is fortunate that this is winding up in the education sector, according to Banks, because it already has the expertise needed:

- The workplace is now where education was 20 years ago in terms of looking at diversity and the achievement of equity.
- Personality and temperament issues have been recognized in education as important for 40 years; this interest is the basis of self-esteem, self-management and intrinsic motivation knowledge that has been building up in education.
- Testing is to be the basis of the new workplace, and "no professional community has worked harder on the technical aspects of testing than education."

Because of this long-term expertise on new workplace issues, the education community should articulate standards of equity in testing, Banks said. It should be the resource that helps set standards and practices that would cover diversity in supervision; diversity in performance, style and approaches; exploration of ways to optimize diverse approaches ("the workplace is trying to move to a few standards, and we in education know that won't work"); and awareness of group differences in job definitions. Basically, said Banks, "we need an application of diverse standards in the workplace, not just those articulated by white males."

A broad oversight strategy would "establish local, state and national commissions to develop standards for workplace assessments that reflect the criteria of equity," Banks recommended. Such commissions would make sure there are model workplaces that reflect equity, evaluate equal employment opportunities with guidelines and criteria that reflect standards of equity, and make sure that the technical work on standards and guidelines reflect equity.

Banks re-emphasized that American industry is undergoing a change in the way products are made, moving from the Taylor model of highly regimented specific tasks to a new model of constant shifting and realignment of production. Specificity is being replaced by diversity, he said. "We know from the reform movements of the 1950s and 1960s," Banks explained, "that some of the characteristics being seen as imperative now are the same that show up in pockets of the population, such as in minorities, in women, and in males in certain areas."

Taylorism, he said, was about making the workplace fit the worker—at the time it was developed, this meant a worker drawn from immigrant populations and lacking high skill levels. There is a danger that the new workplace will be shaped around narrowly defined skills. Instead, policymakers should be using the natural abilities found in children to be diverse and use different styles, as well as performance learning, "to educate the workplace." The workplace, he said, should be shaped—as it was under Taylorism—to fit the characteristics of the population that will form the workforce.

Instead, Banks fears, the rhetoric about the workplace is saying that "the characteristics needed don't exist...and must be forced out of people through testing."

Concern about equity and fairness in testing policies is not new, Beverly Cole, national director of education and housing for the NAACP, reminded Continuing Conference participants. Various anti-standardized testing groups are currently active, among them the National Commission on Testing and Public Policy, funded by the Ford Foundation. Its report, released in 1990, criticized the

Beverly Cole

over-reliance on testing and noted that certain groups, including blacks, have been excluded from, rather than included in, full educational opportunities because of testing policies.

According to Cole, there is a sufficient correlation between socio-economic status and academic achievement to warrant caution about the use of tests. There are designs for good testing programs, but they require time and money to develop. Consequently, said Cole, schools wind up relying on multiple choice testing instruments that are often culturally, linguistically and gender-biased.

The most recent forceful opposition to standardized testing policies has been mounted by the National Forum on Assessment, a coalition of 40 organizations. Cole said it did not take a stand on a national examination system, but it did adopt eight guidelines for testing:

- Student achievement standards and goals should be defined before assessments are developed.
- The primary purpose of testing should be to assist educators and policymakers to improve instruction and advance student learning.
- The tasks and procedures should be fair to all students.
- Tests should be valid and appropriate responses to the standards expected.
- Test results should be reported in the context of other relevant information, such as socio-economic status, per pupil expenditures, outcomes of schooling.
- Teachers should be involved in decisions over the design and use of tests.
- Test results should be understandable to the public.
- The assessments should be subject to continuous review and improvement.

This document and other attempts to ensure equity in testing "will not be worth the paper they are printed on unless we are willing to make our concerns known wherever it is important to do so," Cole emphasized.

The NAACP is equally concerned about the testing of teachers and is critical of some of the test development going on as with student testing, she said.

Curtis Banks is professor of psychology and chair of the Developmental Program at Howard University. He serves as a member of the Assessment Committee of the Secretary's Commission for Acquiring Necessary Skills and of the Assessment Task Force of the National Council on Education Standards and Testing. Prior to her appointment at the NAACP, Beverly Cole was director of a cultural awareness training project for the University of California/Los Angeles and has authored numerous resources on testing and minorities.

Equity: A Generational Perspective

STEPHEN L. CARTER

Stephen Carter

Representing views that might seem to express an evolving approach to the equity agenda, Stephen Carter, author of *Reflections of An Affirmative Action Baby*, spoke like the civil rights leaders of the past on the reasons for racial injustice in this country.

The perception of black inferiority is a persistent myth that was created on purpose, he said. Because knowledge is subversive, "a nation trapped in its own web of slavery and Jim Crow had to prevent its victims from learning to communicate," according to Carter. The predecessors to the Southern Education Foundation worked to promote higher education of the freed slaves and their progeny in the South, work that was carried out "in the face of white hostility and often in the face of black skepticism, as well."

In the post-Civil War era, Carter said, economic hardship helped build Jim Crow. As the demand for skilled labor grew, some blacks slipped through the barriers, but many were left behind "because racist America refused to make room." This is a description from a century ago, but it is "strikingly similar" to today's conditions for blacks as described by Carter. The success of David Duke, for example, "shows how effective an appeal to the baser side of the human psyche can be in times of economic hardship," Carter said.

But there are major differences from times past, according to Carter, namely the fact that the country cannot afford the costs of racism any longer because of today's competitive climate. Yet, formidable obstacles exist. A solid college education is more important now than ever before, Carter said, so "it is vital to come to grips with the reasons that black students are less likely than white students to go to college and less likely than white students to stay." While there are many reasons for the poor college-going rate of blacks, Carter came down on one major reason alone—the growing cost of a college education. By stopping the subsidization of student loans well below the market rate, "the government did terrible damage to the black community in the 1980s." Carter also said forcefully that the government "should keep its hands off racially targeted loans and grants in aid."

Carter noted that Head Start and better health care are two initiatives that would lead to better achievement by black children, but they come with high price tags. Yet, to ignore the need for such interventions means the country will lose millions of young people as productive adults, he said.

When students reach college, efforts must focus on keeping them there, Carter stressed. Saying that he strongly supported affirmative action programs in college admission, Carter also pointed out, however, that such policies sometimes thrust black students into competitive situations for which their academic backgrounds have not prepared them. Affirmative action should not be blamed for this; rather, the blame should be put on the lack of a nurturing environment. Traditionally black colleges and Catholic colleges provide such an environment and avoid the high dropout rates of other campuses, he noted.

"Whatever may be tried, either to improve our competitive situation in high school or to help more black kids go to college or to help more black kids stay in college," Carter said, "it strikes me that our goal always ought to be the drive for excellence.... Our goal has to be running with the opportunities as we discover

"This time of seeming crisis is an important moment for America.... It is a moment that the black community must seize, a moment to stake a forceful claim for our role in American life. Not because the nation owes us, although it certainly does, even though it chooses to deny the fact, but because the nation needs us, as it needs all of its many talented, ambitious and hard-working people."

them, doing our best and striving to be the best, no matter what forces are in place trying to hold us back." The important point, he added, is "not how we get into school...but what we do when we get there."

Striving for excellence has always been a part of the black experience, but it is more necessary than ever. Carter explained: "Many of us grew up in families where we were taught that you have to work twice as hard to be considered nearly as good. The fact that there are more opportunities available for advancement has not changed that reality. So, if we're going to position ourselves to take advantage of the opportunities that the more competitive economy will supply, the drive for excellence is absolutely essential."

Instead of being afraid of this challenge, blacks should relish it, Carter said. "I have always refused to accept that racism has so wounded us as a people that we are less capable than others," he insisted. "Our goal must be believing and demonstrating to ourselves and also to the market that we're as capable as, and often better than, everybody else."

Carter and Jean Fairfax expressed somewhat different views on what Carter's phrase "reconciled solidarity" implies. Fairfax criticized it for not encompassing agreement on programmatic approaches to equity for blacks. But Carter said he was concerned when black people with certain viewpoints are considered "unauthentic." Viewpoint diversity reflects a healthy community, he said, noting that he supported the "process" of the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court, although he did not support his confirmation: "I disagree with much of what Thomas says and stands for, but that does not mean I am blacker than he is."

The black community, he said, should be able "to accept a variety of views on issues we think are vitally important." There is no single black experience, Carter reminded his audience.

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Meeting the Challenge of Diversity

SUZETTE DENSLOW, OLLYE SHIRLEY AND BARBARA GOMEZ

Suzette Denslow

Cultural diversity in the United States is coming on like a runaway freight train—a hefty movement that is catching society, and particularly the schools, unprepared. The inability of the education system to adapt adequately to the needs of students who are "different" is part of the history of the black experience in America, but until the numbers of "different" children began to increase dramatically, as in the past two decades, the issue was muted.

All levels of interest—national, state and local—are moving to help schools adapt to culturally different students, rather than have them adapt to a monolithic institution, three panelists told participants. As Suzette Denslow, deputy secretary of education for the Commonwealth of Virginia, put it: "Forcing all children into one mold only ensures that we have misshapen students."

Virginia's population is rapidly becoming extremely diverse, Denslow said,

and the experiences of a few heavily impacted communities are providing lessons and models for the whole state. The underlying principles of the cultural diversity approach being used in Virginia include:

- An excellent education for all children, giving them the skills to be employable. This means teaching them in ways that enable them to learn, but it does not mean, she said, that education should be watered down.
- Providing an education that adapts to cultural diversity will cost more, especially in lowering the pupil-teacher ratios.
- Cultural diversity through education is meant for all students, not just those who are different. It must be presented as "a natural occurrence."

Henrico County, in the Richmond area, has had an influx of immigrant students and has developed a plan for a culturally diverse curriculum and instruction. Foreign students are given immediate assessments of skills and individual plans. There is a heavy emphasis on teacher training, and other students are paired with new foreign students. The schools provide tutors, use foreign-born adults as language teachers, and offer extracurricular activities for cultural groups. The county now plans to establish an international magnet school. One problem encountered in this effort, Denslow said, was the attitude that assimilation of different cultures "is okay in blue-collar areas but objected to in elite areas because the latter fear such students will lower test scores."

Working in a political atmosphere that "sometimes places a premium on ignorance," the Jackson, Miss., school system has a mission of coming together for its students and its community, reported Ollye Shirley, president of the Jackson public school district board. With an 80 percent black school system, the board and school leadership decided several years ago that different groups in the school system "should not be pitted against each other." Among the "coming together" initiatives adopted by the district are:

- Strong early intervention programs, such as classes for four-year-olds and Reading Recovery, to ensure that young children are academically successful.
- An increase in graduation requirements to counteract the attitude of many black parents that their children could not perform at high levels in science and math.
- Weighting of advanced classes to motivate students to try for more challenging content.
- An evening high school to accommodate students who need different schedules.

Shirley also said that the district has started a curriculum audit, added counselors in elementary schools, launched a school-family partnership initiative, adopted a multicultural curriculum, and established a professional development center. All staff have received training in multicultural education and different learning styles, she said.

A channel to provide a culturally diverse educational environment is community service learning, Barbara Gomez, director of the Community Service Learning project for the Council of Chief State School Officers, told Continuing Conference participants. Because experiential learning depends upon forming partnerships with communities, it provides both students and teachers with links to culturally diverse resources surrounding schools. It also is an approach that can be adapted for all age levels.

Community service learning often draws from the characteristics of different cultures. Most Native American groups, for example, consider service a natural part of life, Gomez said, and she described a project underway with the Zuni in New Mexico. In a far different setting—Oak Park, Ill.,—cross-age tutoring is providing a needed boost for students at risk of failing. Gomez noted that not all students learn at their best in classroom settings. For many—and often because of

Barbara Gomez

"It is not the children we are trying to fix. Change has to take place in society, but we can only change one piece at a time... I think we are moving in the right direction. We have no choice."

Ollye Shirley

their cultural backgrounds—hands-on, experiential learning is the best way to engage them academically. It also helps all students learn to be more caring individuals, she said.

All of the panelists agreed that teacher training is a key to successfully integrating cultural diversity into the curriculum and instruction—and is a particularly disturbing problem as students become more diverse while diversity among teachers diminishes.

Suzette Denslow was director of research for the Virginia Municipal League and a member of the faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University before assuming her job at the state level. In addition to her work with the Jackson school board, Ollye Shirley is a consultant for the Children's Television Workshop and recipient of a number of awards for her work on behalf of black children. Barbara Gomez previously worked with the Family Independent Project of the University of Maryland and was a program monitor for the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.

School Choice

DENIS DOYLE AND BELLA ROSENBERG

The issue of school choice aroused passionate and heated comments as the Ninth Annual Continuing Conference drew to a conclusion. A debate about school choice between advocates of different positions took place in a context in which this issue is presented as one specially crafted for children of the poor and minorities. Bush administration proposals for school reform, for example, would change traditional programs aimed at providing equal education opportunities, such as Chapter I, into parental choice programs. It is the disadvantaged, proponents argue, who would benefit most from choice programs.

Under the America 2000 plan of the Bush administration, the choice debate, once confined to public schools, has been broadened to include private schools, as well (a plan now implemented for inner-city children in Milwaukee).

Declaring that choice in the public sector no longer is under debate, Denis Doyle of the Hudson Institute focused on the issues—and defense—of extending choice to private schools. This idea was embodied in Chapter I when it began, he noted, and not until a later court decision was the involvement of Catholic schools in Chapter I programs curtailed. If vouchers could be used to extend desegregation efforts in city school systems, such as Kansas City, Doyle predicted the effect "would be dramatic, sudden, and effective."

Most of Doyle's arguments centered on comparisons of the United States' public funding of education with that of other countries. Only this country and Sweden among industrial democracies, he said, do not provide "generous" support for those attending non-public schools.

Declaring that "cookie-cutter schools no longer fit today's society," Doyle said that choice was not an end in itself but a means to create "reciprocity of a community of shared values" that could select its own curriculum and pedagogy. In no other area of life except the criminal justice system, he said, is choice denied to citizens, including higher education.

Bella Rosenberg

"Private schools should have no more right to public funds than country clubs to own public beaches."

Doyle acknowledged that Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, has drawn attention to studies showing that students in non-public schools do not perform better than those in public schools, but he insisted that "low-income children consistently perform better" in nonpublic schools.

Bella Rosenberg, assistant to Shanker at the AFT, countered with the data analyzed by the union. Such comparisons mix apples and oranges, she implied, because private schools have three times the number of families with incomes over $50,000 as do public schools, while public schools enroll three times as many students from families with incomes under $15,000. Further, private schools choose who can attend, with 66 percent of independent schools requiring entrance exams and 71 percent of Catholic schools citing disciplinary behavior as a criteria for entrance.

Even with such selective student bodies, the non-public schools do not outperform public school students at some levels and have only slight advantages at others, Rosenberg said. Drawing from national assessment data, she said that at the 12th grade level in math, for example, the public and private sector students were only about 7 points different on a 500-point scale. Among top achievers, both systems "were in a dead heat," although neither performed at very high levels, she admitted.

Rosenberg also downplayed the importance of international comparisons because the education systems are so different. Doyle had used Australia as a good example of choice—30 percent of the students in that country attend non-government schools with public funds—but Rosenberg described the education system there as the "educational equivalent of Lebanon."

In a tit-for-tat discussion, Doyle and Rosenberg argued philosophy more than statistics. Asked why the country does not have a private military, if privatization is so exemplary, Doyle said he was not concerned about the choices for the upperclass but about those available to the poor. "They are condemned to bad schools," he said, "and it is crazy public social policy to have tremendous resources, such as the Catholic schools, which are being allowed to crumble." That issue is about school finance, which is a different forum, Rosenberg answered.

If public funding is available for private higher education, why is it not available for K-12 schooling? Rosenberg pointed out that the public funds education because of its role in developing citizenship and common values: "There are some things the market cannot do." She also said that residents of inner cities may favor choice, but they are talking about choice within the public school system.

Despite the heat of the debate, Doyle said there was no groundswell in this country for private school choice and proposed a modest beginning—that vouchers for Chapter I students be tried out in five states for five years. "That way we can find out what the issues and problems are," he said.

But Rosenberg said private school choice is a looming controversy in many states. "There is no middle ground on this issue," she countered.

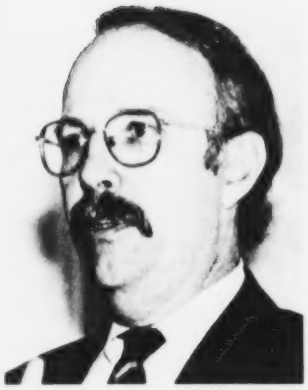
Denis Doyle is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and a former director of Education Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute. He writes frequently on education policy issues. Before joining the AFT, Bella Rosenberg was a research associate at the National Institute of Education.

Denis Doyle

"Residents of poor, inner cities are those most in favor of school choice."

The Continuing Challenge of Education Reform

DAVID HORNBECK



David Hornbeck

In several sessions during the Continuing Conference, Kentucky was held up as an example of comprehensive school reform, of equity in school financing and of cutting-edge leadership in education. On the basis of school years completed, the Bluegrass State ranks at the bottom of the education ladder. It has now risen to the very top in terms of school restructuring to ensure equity.

Kentucky's reforms are premised on the need to look at equality of results as much, if not more than, equality of opportunity. Because of the changing demographics in this country, providing opportunity is not good enough, David Hornbeck told the concluding luncheon session of the Continuing Conference. "The issue is whether, in fact, we have succeeded."

This is the philosophy embedded by Hornbeck in Kentucky's reform plan as he worked with the legislature and special committees to reshape that state's education system from the ground up. He cited nine factors that need to come together in a school district or state in order to move schools toward equality of results, all of which are found in the Kentucky plan:

- *A set of assumptions about learning.* First, that all children can learn at high levels (results are shaped by expectations, Hornbeck noted). Second, that much more is known about what works than is practiced, such as the importance of pre-kindergarten experiences, or the example of Jaime Escalante in Los Angeles' barrio. Third, that all children should learn the same high content but that how they learn, where they learn, when they learn and from whom they learn "ought to be up for grabs." The answer to how, where, when and from whom "ought to be what works."
- *A definition of outcomes that sets high standards, applies to all students and enumerates the resources needed to do the job.* (Kentucky's objectives are organized around core concepts, such as studying democracy in social studies or evolution in science) and categories of desired characteristics for students, such as integrating knowledge, attendance, citizenship and postgraduation success.
- *Assessments that are as rich as the outcomes.* Dumb tests produce dumb results, he pointed out.
- *Consequences or incentives to produce success and penalize failure.* A school that persistently fails, for example, needs to feel the onus of sanctions.
- *Authority at the school site.* If schools are to be held accountable for results, then the people in them need control over the factors that impact on student success, such as personnel, budgets, instruction, curriculum and the organization of the school day.
- *Staff development.* "You cannot send out a letter to school staff saying, 'You'll be pleased to know you're part of an outcome-based, consequences-driven, site-based managed system, and let us know how it works out,'" Hornbeck noted. Human resources development needs to be a major ingredient of school restructuring, he said.
- *Pre-kindergarten programs* for all disadvantaged youngsters which provide developmentally appropriate quality programs.
- *Provision of collaborative services* for needy children, preferably through

"We have for a long time focused on equality of opportunity...and that remains a moral imperative. But it is my own judgment that...we ought to begin to shift from language emphasizing equality of opportunity to language that emphasizes equality of results."

school sites.

- *A much heavier emphasis upon technology.*

A comprehensive, radical reform of schools based on results can help at-risk children and promote equity, Hornbeck argued, because it makes it more possible to be successful with the non-advantaged school population, and thus have good arguments for increased funding. Only small, incremental funding for the disadvantaged will be possible "unless we send a different kind of message to legislatures...a message that says, 'You're gonna get more out of the next dollar you spend than the last dollar you spent.'"

The agenda based on results also offers a more effective way of regulation, one based on outcome rather than regulation by input, Hornbeck said. The latter has not produced successful results, he noted.

Lastly, Hornbeck said, the emphasis upon achieving results provides a new handle to sue states. As Julius Chambers argued in the opening session of the Continuing Conference, a new generation of equity litigation could be built around the current drive for education standards. As standards become higher and better defined, "it will be possible to say in almost all states that they have an obligation to provide the resources, the technical assistance and the help that will permit all students to achieve the standards," Hornbeck said.

At that moment, "we will have added to the moral imperative of equality of opportunity a matter of equality of results."

David Hornbeck, former superintendent of schools in Maryland, is education advisor to the National Center on Education and the Economy, the Business Roundtable and many other government institutions. A lawyer, his work has centered on civil rights issues in education.

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A PARTING SHOT . . .

L to R: SEF Board Chairman and President of Xavier University of Louisiana Norman Francis, John A. Griffin Award recipient Jean Fairfax and SEF President Elridge McMillan admire Jean's award.

Leake County, Miss., community activist Winson Hudson shares her appreciation of Jean Fairfax during the award ceremony.

Ruby Martin, secretary of administration for the Commonwealth of Virginia and Continuing Conference planning committee member, moderates a session of the Conference.

A Continuing Conference participant listens intently during a session.

Between sessions at the Conference a lively discussion takes place among participants.

Vernon Jordan, chairman of the John A. Griffin Award dinner, congratulates Jean Fairfax on receiving the award.

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